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# **Division of Child and Family Services Employee Exit Survey Report**

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## Introduction/Background

This study was initiated for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Worker Recruitment and Retention committee to determine the reasons employees leave DCFS employment. The information was gathered during the exit interview with the employee and entered into an Access database by regional personnel. Employees are asked their reason for leaving, ideas for retaining employees and improving conditions, what impressed them about DCFS, and how employment with DCFS helped them meet their career goals. The information may be utilized by the DCFS Worker Recruitment and Retention committee in their assignment to assess possible changes to recruitment strategies for workers and organizational modifications to improve worker satisfaction and retention.

## Methodology

The 'Exit Survey' Access database was queried for time periods of 1/1/05 to 12/31/07. The information was extracted using the same dates for each region separately. Frequency counts by category were obtained and text entries were reviewed to find common themes. Additionally termination data was extracted from the Human Resources system to determine the number of employees that left state employment during the same time frame.

## Results

The data below capture the number of employees leaving DCFS where an exit survey was completed, and the reason for their resignation. It is important to note that not all employees who end their service with DCFS are willing or able to participate in an exit interview, so the data do not reflect all workers who have resigned. A summary of Division and Region data are below with the main themes for each free text category listed in each section. Employees were instructed to mark all the reasons for leaving that apply, consequently percents will add to more than 100.

### ***Division***

Data were collected on 288 individuals who have left DCFS employment in the last three years. 588 employees had termination dates in the Human Resources system in those years (Note that this number does not include those that may have transferred to another state agency). The majority of these people (81%) were leaving state government. People reported that they resigned primarily because of job stress, a desire for different duties, and better pay. Other reasons included relocation, leaving the workforce, and returning to school. , Approximately 12% indicated that a conflict with management contributed to their decision to leave.

Disposition: <b><i>Agency Dismissal</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>2</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>233</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>34</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another State agency</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>19</b>

Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>198</b>	Number with Exit Interviews CY05: <b>109</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>179</b>	Number with Exit Interviews CY06: <b>88</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>211</b>	Number with Exit Interviews CY07: <b>91</b>
<i>Reasons for Leaving:</i>	
Job Difficulty: 27 (9%)	Desire for Different Duties: 87 (30%)
Job Stress: 94 (32%)	Health Issues: 14 (5%)
Better Pay: 73 (25%)	Family Move: 47 (16%)
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 15 (5%)	Leaving Workforce: 52 (18%)
Conflict with Management: 34 (12%)	Returning to School: 37 (13%)
Conflict with Clientele: 7 (2%)	

### ***Northern Region***

In Northern Region, job stress was cited in almost half of the employee exit interviews as a cause for resignation, followed by a desire for different duties and better pay. The free text comments supported the need to address these as well as to offer more part-time job opportunities and agency supports. Flexibility, supported educational advancement and worker dedication were among the positive attributes listed for the region.

Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>36</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>6</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another State agency</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>3</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>50</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>9</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>34</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>14</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>54</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>22</b>	
<i>Reasons for Leaving:</i>		
Job Difficulty: 8 (17%)	Desire for Different Duties: 14 (30%)	
Job Stress: 21 (46%)	Health Issues: 1 (2%)	
Better Pay: 13 (28%)	Family Move: 11 (24%)	
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 1 (2%)	Leaving Workforce: 6 (13%)	
Conflict with Management: 7 (15%)	Returning to School: 5 (11%)	
Conflict with Clientele: 3 (7%)		
<b>How can we Retain Employees and How can we Improve Conditions</b>		
<b>What Impressed you most</b>		
<b>How did we help meet Career Goals</b>		
Reduce caseloads	Supervisors, Team and Co-Workers	Good work experience
Reduce stress	Flexibility	Ability to obtain a degree
Better pay	Dedication of workers	Set foundation for future
More part-time opportunities		
More staff		
Employee appreciation		
More State cars		
Agency support		

### ***Salt Lake Valley Region***

A desire for different duties was the most common reason for leaving DCFS employment in Salt Lake Valley Region. We do not know from the available data if transfer to different positions within the Division would have accommodated the needs expressed here and lead to greater retention, or if this response is more reflective of a wanting a change from child welfare duties in general. Comments in this region were similar to Northern Region's comments, however Salt Lake Valley Region employees also noted a desire for more advancement opportunities.

Disposition: <b><i>Agency Dismissal</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>1</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>140</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>22</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another State agency</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>12</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>83</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>81</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>71</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>53</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>74</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>41</b>	
<b><i>Reasons for Leaving:</i></b>		
Job Difficulty: 5 (3%)	Desire for Different Duties: 52 (30%)	
Job Stress: 49 (28%)	Health Issues: 5 (3%)	
Better Pay: 38 (22%)	Family Move: 25 (14%)	
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 10 (6%)	Leaving Workforce: 22 (13%)	
Conflict with Management: 12 (7%)	Returning to School: 19 (11%)	
Conflict with Clientele: 1 (1%)		
<b>How can we Retain Employees and How can we Improve Conditions</b>	<b>What Impressed you most</b>	<b>How did we help meet Career Goals</b>
<b>Better Pay</b>	<b>Supervisors, Team and Co-Workers</b>	<b>Didn't see CW as a career</b>
<b>Reduce caseloads</b>	<b>Flexibility</b>	<b>Ability to obtain a degree</b>
<b>Reduce stress</b>		<b>Great experience</b>
<b>Reduce paperwork</b>		<b>Defined career</b>
<b>More advancement opportunities</b>		
<b>More appreciation</b>		
<b>Supervisor/ Administration support</b>		
<b>Supervisor availability and accountability</b>		
<b>Safety issues, resources and training</b>		

### ***Western Region***

In Western Region, over half of the employees who completed an interview reported that they were leaving the workforce. The reasons for leaving the workforce are unclear, but may include people retiring or staying at home with their children. The same amount of employees indicated a high rate of job stress. Comments were positive regarding the training opportunities offered.

Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>16</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>1</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another State agency</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>2</b>

Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>19</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>2</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>23</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>7</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>25</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>10</b>
<i>Reasons for Leaving:</i>	
Job Difficulty: 7 (37%)	Desire for Different Duties: 7 (37%)
Job Stress: 10 (53%)	Health Issues: 1 (5%)
Better Pay: 6 (32%)	Family Move: 5 (26%)
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 0 (0%)	Leaving Workforce: 10 (53%)
Conflict with Management: 1 (5%)	Returning to School: 4 (21%)
Conflict with Clientele: 0 (0%)	
<b>How can we Retain Employees and How can we Improve Conditions</b>	<b>What Impressed you most</b>
Reduce caseloads	Dedicated staff
Better pay	Conferences and trainings
Better career paths	Practice Model
More support staff	
Reduce stress	
Reduce paperwork	
	<b>How did we help meet Career Goals</b>
	Training opportunities
	Good experience

### ***Eastern Region***

Employees leaving Eastern Region indicated conflict with management as a prevalent reason for terminating employment. They noted a need for more supportive supervisors in the region. Desire for different duties, job stress, and better pay were also main reasons for leaving DCFS. Eastern was one of three regions whose terminating employees indicated being impressed with the Practice Model of DCFS.

Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>21</b>
Disposition: : <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>	Number of Employees: <b>4</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>23</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>8</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>32</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>10</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>31</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>7</b>
<i>Reasons for Leaving:</i>	
Job Difficulty: 4 (16%)	Desire for Different Duties: 9 (36%)
Job Stress: 8 (32%)	Health Issues: 4 (16%)
Better Pay: 8 (32%)	Family Move: 5 (20%)
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 3 (12%)	Leaving Workforce: 7 (28%)
Conflict with Management: 10 (40%)	Returning to School: 5 (20%)
Conflict with Clientele: 3 (12%)	
<b>How can we Retain Employees and How can we Improve Conditions</b>	<b>What Impressed you most</b>
Better pay	Caliber of caseworkers
Less stress	Practice Model
Supportive supervisors	
Reduce caseloads	
Be Practice Model friendly	
Support workers	
	<b>How did we help meet Career Goals</b>
	Good experience
	Community partners and resources

### ***Southwest Region***

Approximately one-third of Southwest Region employees terminated employment with DCFS to gain higher wages. Leaving the workforce and job stress were the next most common responses. Comments in this region were similar to those from other regions regarding the need to reduce workload, increase resources and pay, and to allow for flexibility in work schedules. Like other regions, employees from Southwest Region were impressed with the dedication of workers to the mission of the organization.

Disposition: <b><i>Agency Dismissal</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>1</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Leaving Utah State Government</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>20</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another DHS Division</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>1</b>
Disposition: <b><i>Transferring to another State agency</i></b>		Number of Employees: <b>2</b>
Number of Employees leaving in CY05: <b>17</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>9</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY06: <b>12</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>4</b>	
Number of Employees leaving in CY07: <b>20</b>	Number of Employees with exit interviews: <b>11</b>	
<b><i>Reasons for Leaving:</i></b>		
Job Difficulty: 3 (13%)	Desire for Different Duties: 5 (21%)	
Job Stress: 6 (25%)	Health Issues: 3 (13%)	
Better Pay: 8 (33%)	Family Move: 1 (4%)	
Better Benefits Elsewhere: 1 (4%)	Leaving Workforce: 7 (29%)	
Conflict with Management: 4 (17%)	Returning to School: 4 (17%)	
Conflict with Clientele: 0 (0%)		
<b>How can we Retain Employees and How can we Improve Conditions</b>		
<b>What Impressed you most</b>		
<b>How did we help meet Career Goals</b>		
<b>More training</b>	<b>Caseworkers/Team work/Dedication</b>	<b>Good experience</b>
<b>Better pay</b>	<b>Practice Model</b>	<b>Gained valuable skills</b>
<b>Reduce caseload (more workers)</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Community partners and resources</b>
<b>Flexible work hours</b>		<b>Ability to obtain degree</b>
<b>Reduce paperwork</b>		
<b>Decrease stress</b>		
<b>Needed resources</b>		

### **Summary and Recommendations**

The data from the exit surveys indicate that job stress and a desire for different duties are the two most prevalent reasons that workers leave DCFS employment. Based on responses to the "job difficulty" category, it appears that "job stress" is related more to high workload than to the difficulty of the job tasks. It is also unclear if the desire for different duties could have been accommodated within the division by changing work assignments or if the employees wanted to leave child welfare work entirely. The Division should explore whether current employees would experience less 'burn out' if they were reassigned to other duties within the Division. Additionally DCFS should explore reducing documentation or other unnecessary duties so that workers can spend more time interacting with clients and can better manage their caseloads.. This is applicable for all employees of the division whether they provide direct service or serve

in a supporting role. The other alternative would be to hire additional employees to ease workload burden, but that has a higher fiscal impact.

Another common reason for leaving was to seek higher wages. This impacted approximately one-quarter of people resigning from DCFS. DCFS should continue to seek ways to improve reimbursement for employees, such as annual merit step increases or career ladder tracks where fiscally and/or legally feasible.

There are a number of workers who appear to leave for personal reasons unrelated to DCFS, such as leaving the workforce, returning to school, or relocation. Although these do not appear to be directly due to DCFS work, there were comments requesting flexibility in scheduling and the ability to work part-time that may have impacted some of these workers. DCFS should explore options that may allow people to remain working while attending school, or allow retiring employees and employees who are caretakers to work fewer hours; this would allow the division to retain their expertise. A cost benefit analysis of turnover costs versus retaining experienced workers on a part-time basis would help DCFS in analyzing the possibilities.

The Worker Recruitment and Retention committee has drafted a survey that will gather some of the additional information that is recommended in this report. Additionally the committee along with the regional personnel responsible for the exit surveys may want to review the data from this report and discuss if modifications to the survey are needed to gather some more specific information in the future.